

*Highland Falls, NY* – U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19), whose Congressional District includes the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, issued the following statement in response to President Barack Obama's announcement of a change in strategy in Afghanistan.

"The terrorists who attacked America and New York on 9/11, killing thousands of innocent American civilians, were trained in Al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. Preventing Al-Qaeda from regaining a safe haven in Afghanistan is absolutely vital to America's national security. I am glad that the President came here to West Point to explain his plans directly to our nation's future officer corps. The new strategy that the President announced tonight includes critical changes that can lead to American and Afghan success against the Taliban leadership and Al-Qaeda: requiring progress and benchmarks to be made by the Afghan government, expanding military presence beyond the cities to Taliban strongholds in the east and south, enabling America's withdrawal by training Afghan forces, and increasing direct economic development to provide economic options besides joining the Taliban."

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